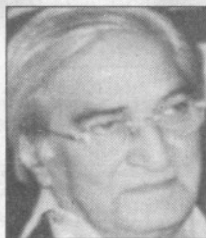


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All too American

VIEW



MUNNOO BHAI

The exploitative system that has turned the whole world into a torture centre for the workers has produced 100,000 millionaires around the world over the past 15 years. At the same time more than 2 billion people have been sunk below the poverty line

THE UNITED STATES HAS clearly damaged beyond repair its national identity in relation to the Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq. So much so that the US, which commanded universal sympathy on the evening of September 11, 2001, was condemned in May 2004 even by its own citizens.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claimed during his May 13, 2004, visit to Abu Ghraib prison that the atrocities against prisoners at the facility did not represent American values. Investigative crime reporter Anne Marie Cusac, however, says the "images from Iraq looked all too American to me."

In his article, 'Abu Ghraib, USA', she writes: "When I saw the picture of an Iraqi prisoner standing on a box with electric wires attached to his body — the picture that later came to be called the US Statue of Liberty — I recalled several such incidents in Sacramento prisons of California. When I saw a US security official setting a dog on an Abu Ghraib prisoner, I remembered the Brazoria County Detention Center, in Texas. When I learnt that male prisoners' faces were covered with female undergarments, I recalled the Maricopa County Jail in Phoenix, Arizona. When I saw naked Abu Ghraib prisoners piled over one another to form a human pyramid, I remembered the Utah Prison System."

Ms Cusac says she has been reporting for eight years now on the treatment meted out to prisoners in US jails and detention centres. She says she has witnessed human rights violations, torture, sadism and sexual perversion at such a large scale that it has ceased to be out of the ordinary. Many people, she

says, ask after seeing the Abu Ghraib pictures how it could have happened. "I would like to ask them," she says, "what was surprising about it? Was it not happening in their own country?" "If we are not bothered," she goes on to say, "by the inhuman treatment of prisoners in US, why should we worry about what is happening in Iraqi prisons?"

In her 12-page report, Ms Cusac recounts details of inhuman treatment of prisoners in several US cities and states. It is unnecessary, however, to step inside one of these prisons to learn these details for what is happening in the prisons outside these prisons is no different.

The exploitative system that has turned the whole world into a torture centre for the workers has produced 100,000 millionaires around the world over the past 15 years. At the same time more than 2 billion people have been sunk below the poverty line. The white lie about 'economic development' that the western media has been telling as a sacred truth has become so rotten that it is finally laying bare the facts. And the fact is that at the beginning of the 21st century science and technology are at a stage where they can easily

solve all the world's problems within a very short time. Hunger, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and disease can be eliminated. But the exploitative system benefiting from poverty, illiteracy and disease has made hunger, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and disease so widespread that there is no parallel for it in human history. Isn't this fact more terrible than the one highlighted by the Abu Ghraib pictures?

Munnoo Bhai is a writer and columnist